

*The separate Souls of Good Men
with Christ in Heaven.*

131.
A
S E R M O N

P R E A C H ' D

At *Denton* in the County of *Norfolk*,

On *January* 11, 17 $\frac{1}{3}$.

Upon the D E A T H of
Mrs. ANNA BAKER.

W I T H
Some Remarkable Passages of her
Character.

By **THOMAS SCOTT**, Minister of the
Gospel in *Norwich*.

*And I heard a Voice from Heaven, saying unto me, Write,
Blessed are the Dead, which die in the Lord, from
henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest
from their Labours, and their Works do follow them.
Rev. 14. 13.*

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To my Honoured FRIENDS,
Mr. JOHN BAKER,

A N D

Mrs. Jane Hurriou,

Son and Daughter of Mrs. Anna Baker
 deceas'd.

SIR, and MADAM,

WHEN I was requested to preach this Sermon, I was loth to undertake a Service, which I thought might have more Justice done it by other Hands; and yet now I venture to do a bolder thing, by proclaiming upon the House tops what I before delivered in a Corner. I think no Man ever had a greater Aversion to appear in this publick manner than my self, from the sincere Respect I have for Mankind, and a Consciousness of my Inability to offer to the World what may be worthy of its Acceptance, however I am at present over-ruled. What Reception this Discourse will meet with in this critical Age, the Event must shew; in the mean while I have the Testimony of my Conscience, that doing good is my principal

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Aim, and that will bear me out at the Bar of God, what Sentence soever I may undergo at that of Men.

I do not promise to gratify the Curious with things rare and novel; yet this I think, that as the Printing of the Sermon may be to many an Occasion of Reading it; so old Truths in the plain Dress of my unpolished Stile, may, by God's Blessing (and the exactest Performance can do nothing without it) make, or at least refresh some useful Impressions upon the Honest and well prepar'd. And I confess my self quickened to such a way of durable Service as this, by my often Infirmities; which remind me of my latter End, and instigate me to exert my poor Abilities for the Honour of God and the Good of Men, before it comes.

The Subject treated of in the First Part will easily be own'd to be of great Importance to the Consolation of faithful Souls. The great Uncertainty of Life at all Times, and the more than ordinary Reduction of it in our Days, makes it highly concerning to be well acquainted with the Doctrine of the Scriptures in relation to our State after Death. And this I hope will here be made appear to be a Heavenly one, but not with that Variety of Explanation, or Argument, which a larger Treatise would admit of; and yet the Reasonings, tho' not wholly new, are some of them (if I don't mistake) not commonly met with. I own I set so great a Value upon this Knowledge, that the controversial Studies of the Day little affect me in comparison of it. I think also that a labour'd Dissertation upon this Theme should be richly worth the Pains of the most learned and able Men among us, and be a most acceptable and profitable Present to the Church; the rather, because I see a Disposition in many to abandon the Footsteps of the Flock in this Article, to insinuate degrading Notions of the Happiness of separate Souls, and to deny them Mansions in Heaven, tho' they cannot agree among themselves where to lodge them. Such ill concerted Schemes make Death
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more terrible than otherwise it would be, even when we are arm'd against it by more favourable Scripture-Doctrines. These Considerations have engag'd me, tho' one of the unfittest, to draw together in many Particulars all that I can meet with in my Bible, that is justly applicable to our disembodied State, not without Thoughts of digesting and putting them into Form, for a general View and Use.

The main Proposition which is advanc'd in the Second Part concerning the Prebeminence of the separate above the embodied State, no Man will deny. I have therefore only aim'd to produce an affecting and governing Belief of it: For Sense bears so strongly another way, that all Helps are little enough, and none ought to be despis'd, which are any ways useful to gain a practical Determination in favour of this Truth. It is Faith only is the Substance of things hop'd for, and the Evidence of things not seen. But all Men have not this Faith, who yet will not disown the unseen Objects of it.

The drawing of the Character of the Deceased in the Close, is but a just Tribute to so superior a Merit; and is not only vindicated, but recommended by that Scripture Adage, The Righteous shall be had in everlasting Remembrance. And if we are to be Followers of those who thro' Faith and Patience are now inheriting the Promises, it is but necessary, that the illustrious Characters, in which they shined, should be placed in the strongest Point of Light. The Precepts of Religion shew us only what we ought to do; but the endless Perfection of the Commands, and the infinite Malignity of our Natures, would make us despair of doing, and so dishearten us from attempting any thing, if the Examples of Religion did not instruct us what is possible to be done; which likewise strongly excite our sluggish Souls, and rouse our indolent Minds to Emulation. But while the excellent Patterns of the Dead
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are propounded for the Imitation of the Living, the beholding them pierces us with the deepest Sorrow. For what pious Breast can refrain from mourning, that so much Goodness should have left our World, and retir'd to Heaven? And yet tho' the setting of such holy Persons (like that of the Sun) leaves us in perplexing Darkness, a reviving Light appears to our sadned Minds, when we view those very Persons rising again in them, who are their Children, not only by the Derivation of Nature, but by the Similitude of Grace. And this Relief we have under our present Circumstances of Grief; for the main Lines of this admirable Picture of your excellent Mother, are by the Grace of God transcrib'd in you, who by the immature Death of that ingenious and religious Gentleman your Brother, are now become her only surviving Offspring. With Joy we see you tracing her venerable Footsteps; and that you may hold on as you have begun, copying after so bright an Original, and may continually increase the hereditary Honour and Piety of your Family, and surpass the most holy and the most favour'd of your Ancestors in an exemplary Life and triumphant Death, and so deserve a yet fuller and more finish'd Character than they, is the hearty Prayer of,

SIR, and MADAM,

NORWICH,

March 12.

1744.

Your Affectionate Friend,

and Servant,



Thomas Scott.

2 C O R. V. 8.

We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the Body, and present with the Lord.

WE are required in the Holy Scriptures to *mark the perfect Man, and to behold the Upright, for the End of that Man is Peace.* Now this is *always* true, as to the Estate he enters into at Death; and *often* true, as to the Frame of his Soul under the sick Bed Prospects of Death. The fulfilling of this Observation in the former Sense, is a Matter of Faith; the fulfilling it in the latter, a Matter of Sense. It was very eminently so in the Case of that Excellent Person, whose Funeral hath occasion'd this Discourse: Which makes this Text exceeding pertinent, as expressive of the holy and heavenly Temper, which she was enabled steddily to maintain under the Approaches of a dying Hour; and for that Reason was it appointed me.

The Intention of the Apostle, not only in this Verse, but in a very great number of Verses backwards, in this, and in the preceding Chapter, is to represent the Considerations which supported him and the rest of his Brethren in the Ministry (not excluding other Christians) in all their Tribulations. Particularly in the 1st Verse of this 5th Chapter, the Apostle shews us how strongly they were influenc'd, and born up, from the Consideration of the *House not made with Hands; eternal in the Heavens*; into which they were, thro' Death, to pass out of the Tabernacle of the Body. And as God neither in Nature nor in Grace creates any Desires

fires in vain, he demonstrates this immediate Happiness and Glory of the separate Souls of holy Men, by the restless Desires of the new Nature in them after it, in the 2d Verse. And now the Apostle touches,

1. On an awful Conditionality attending the Object of their Groaning, Ver. 3. *If so be that being clothed, with the Spirit and Righteousness of our dear Redeemer, we shall not be found naked,* at the strict Enquiry which Divine Omniscience will make concerning every one of us in a dying Hour. The Apostle moreover,

2. Discovers the Causes of these fervent Desires after the Celestial Glory; and these are either God himself, with all the renewing Influences of his holy Spirit: or the Afflictions of the Body, which often make the present Life a Burden, and drive a Man into the Promises and Prospects of another for Relief. Or, the great Argument which hath been of so much weight with the People of God in all Ages, their being Strangers and Foreigners here on Earth, and absent from their proper Home; that how disagreeable soever their Accommodations are in this World, yet here is not their Rest nor Home, Ver. 6. And that while we are in the Body, we are absent from home, the Apostle proves from hence, *That now we walk by Faith, not by Sight,* Ver. 7. And so he introduces the Words of the Text, *Being confident, I say, and willing, &c.* Which are as if the Apostle had said, Since while we are present in the Body, we are absent from the Lord, who is our Home (for so the original Word implies) therefore we, in the face of the most discouraging Oppositions, persevere in the Profession, and in all the Duties of our most holy Religion, as not only knowing that when we are absent from the Body, we shall be at home with the Lord; but being strongly desirous so to be. It is natural for Persons, who are in foreign Countries, when Troubles overtake them, to wish that they were at home, and to comfort themselves, that e'er long they shall be so. The Text presents you with a twofold Discovery.

1. Of the State of holy Souls when they have departed this Life. When they are *absent from the Body,* they

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they are present with the Lord; they are at home with him. And this is undeniably the Lord Jesus Christ.

2. Of the Temper of holy Souls under all the Inconveniencies of the present Life, with reference to their future Estate. They are *willing even to be absent from their Bodies*, that they may pass into it; and they are greatly born up with the Hope, and Expectation, that they shall do so. My Work therefore at this Time will be to consider,

First, The State of holy Souls, when they have departed this Life.

Secondly, The Temper we ought to be in, with respect to that State.

First, The Estate of holy Souls when they have departed this Life. They are at home with the Lord. *We are confident, I say, and willing, &c.* While we are present in the Body, we are absent from home, because we are absent from the Lord; but when we are absent from the Body, we are at home, because we are present with the Lord. Now here it will be necessary for me to do these Three Things.

- I. To shew you where the Lord is.
- II. To explain what it is to be with the Lord.
- III. To demonstrate (by associating divers other Scriptures with this) what full Evidence there is in your Bibles, that holy Souls do immediately at Death go into the Presence of the Lord.

I. I am to shew you where the Lord is. For tho' at first appearance it may seem to be a Question of little moment where he is, since unto a Soul that loves him, it is sufficient to be with him in any Place; yet since the Article where Christ exists is in it self one of the Fundamentals of the Christian Faith, and upon second Thoughts will appear plainly enough to give a very valuable Light into the present Subject; therefore come see the Place where your Lord is. The Time was when he dwelt upon our Earth; and pitch'd his Tabernacle in the Land of Judah; and liv'd for

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about 33 Years there; but then he was crucified by his own, which was follow'd with a glorious Resurrection; and after 40 Days Converse with his Disciples, he appear'd among Men no more. His Departure was not by a sudden vanishing, but by a gradual ascending up to Heaven, in the view of many of his Followers; and upon the Day of his Ascension, he was received up into Glory, *1 Tim. 3. 16.* When the lamenting Eyes of the Apostles gazing could reach no further, he was still passing thro' the Heavens, the Aerial and the Starry, (*Heb. 4. 16.*) until at last he arrived at the Empyrean Heavens. *For he that descended is the same also that ascended far above all Heavens, that he might fill all things, Eph. 4. 10.* He then presented himself (under the united Characters of a King to reign, and a Priest to intercede) before his Father, who with inexpressible Satisfaction in all that he had done, and suffer'd, in our World, said to him, *Sit thou on my Right Hand, until I make thine Enemies thy Footstool, Psal. 110. 1.* And there he now sits, and there he reigns, and there he is an Advocate and Priest upon his Throne, *Heb. 8. 1.* And thus have I refresh'd your Memories, and I hope warmed your Hearts, by shewing you the Place of Residence of your once crucify'd, but now exalted Saviour. He is far above all Heavens, he is in the Heaven of Heavens, he is in the highest Heavens, and at the Right Hand of God there. And now,

II. It will not be difficult to make out what the being with this exalted Saviour means; what it is for holy Souls, when they depart this Life, to go to and be with the Lord. It plainly leads to these following Particulars.

1. To be present with the Lord implies a being locally where the Lord is.

2. The being admitted to the beatifical Vision, and Fruition of him.

3. It implies a being admitted and received into the immediate Presence and Enjoyment of God himself, and into the General Assembly and Church of the First born, because Christ is there.

4. It implies our being at home, when we are with the Lord.

1. It implies our being in the very World and Place where he is. The separated Souls of righteous Men will not only at Death be present with the Lord, with respect to his essential Presence, nor only with respect to the realizing Representations of the Grace of Faith, but properly and immediately, locally and strictly. That this must be the Meaning, is evident, because Absence from the Body is preredquired to this Presence with the Lord, which the Text speaks of. Therefore no Presence with the Lord is here intended, which we can have in our embodied Estate; to which both the other Senses of being present with the Lord well agree. It is such a Presence with the Lord, is here design'd, in comparison of which, the most intimate Communion with him, the nearest Approaches to him, and the most sublime and abstracted Enjoyment of him, which these Primitive Christians, or Apostles, themselves, were ever admitted to in this World, are a State of Distance from him. For the Apostle saith, Ver. 6. *Knowing that while we are present in the Body, we are absent from the Lord.* As therefore our Lord Jesus is now, in his intire Human Nature, locally in the Celestial Places, and was so in his separate Soul, before the Resurrection of his Body; even so shall we be locally present with him there, in our State of Separation, as well as that of our Resurrection.

2. To be present with the Lord implies our being admitted into a most perfect Vision and Fruition of him: And this is plain from two Considerations, which the Text and Context afford.

(1.) Because the Argument of the Apostle turns entirely upon a Supposition of an exceeding great Advantage, in being present with the Lord. It is for this reason, we are willing to renounce our dear Communion with the Body. For this reason, we groan in the present Tabernacle, earnestly desiring our House, which is from Heaven, because we hope to be with Christ there. But now this strong Inclination toward the celestial State, upon the account of being present with the Lord, would altogether be unaccountable, unless we suppose a very great Advantage in it; but the Advantage can no way be made appear, without a

Supposition of seeing and enjoying him, when we are present with him; for where is the Comfortableness of seeing the Lord *Jesus* in Heaven, without seeing him for our selves? His immediate Presence must needs be either very terrible and tormenting, or very beatifical and gladdning, 2 *Theff.* 1. 8, 9, 10.

(2) The Apostle in the Verse before plainly contradistinguishes our embodied and disembodied State, by these two opposite Characters; the one is a walking by Faith, the other by Sight. *For we walk by Faith, not by Sight.* Consequently, after the Separation of our Souls, the Life of Faith is at an end, and that of Sight begins; and consequently, our Souls are then to be admitted to the nearest Vision, and the most transporting Fruition of him, in whom they now believe. And here I have an Opportunity of enlarging upon a delightful Theme indeed, by entring into the Consideration of the ravishing Communion, which departed holy Souls will have with the Blessed *Jesus*, and the eternal Duration of that Communion; but I am oblig'd to hasten; and therefore,

3. To be present with the Lord implies a being admitted into the immediate Presence and Enjoyment of God himself, and into the General Assembly and Church of the First-born, because Christ is there. If the Souls of Believers at Death are to be present with the Lord *Jesus*, they cannot but be present with God the Father, at whose Right Hand he sits, and with that glorious Society in which he makes so bright a Figure. To this transcendent Assembly, with God the Judge of all, and *Jesus* the Mediator, Supreme in it, are we by Faith united now, and we even now have Communion with it; but a local Cohabitation in it, a proper and immediate Converse with the happy Members of it, are Privileges which are reserv'd for us in the State of Separation from the Body. The Apostle presents us with a fine Idea of our present Union with this Celestial Company, and by consequence of our future Admission into it, and dwelling in it, *Heb.* 12. 22—25. The Conjunction of our departed Spirits with this Society, described under the Metaphor of a City, is the Foundation of what you read,

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Heb. 11. 10, 14, 15, 16. Our Approximation to God is intended in *1 Cor.* 13. 12. and *Rev.* 7. 14, 15, 16, 17. Our Happiness in being there mingled with Angels, is expressly promised by our Lord *Jesus* to *Josua*, *Zech.* 3. 7. where those who stand by, are the Angels. And that Death gathers us to the Spirits of our godly Ancestors, is plain from the Promise to our Father *Abraham*, *Gen.* 15. 15.

4. To be present with the Lord, implies our being at home, when we are with him. This is the Import of the original Word, and this hath been the common Sense of all the Faithful, who in nothing have more agreed than in this, to confess, and to declare plainly, that they took upon themselves to be Strangers and Pilgrims here on Earth; that this World is not their Home, but Heaven is. And certainly Earth cannot be our Home, where our Stay is so very short; but Eternity must be it, where our Existence and Abode will be so very long.

III. I am now to shew you, (by joining divers other Scriptures with this) what full Evidence there is, in your Bibles, to prove that holy Souls, as soon as absent from their Bodies, are present with the Lord. Now this will appear partly from express Testimonies of Scripture, and partly from good Scripture Consequences.

1. From express Testimonies of Scripture. The Thief upon the Cross thus invokes the Lord *Jesus*, *Lord, remember me, when thou comest into thy Kingdom.* And then receives this more than expected or desir'd Answer, *Verily, I say unto thee, this Day thou shalt be with me in Paradise.* Our Lord *Jesus* in these Words speaks plainly to this dying Man, and not in Parables, and expresses himself in Language which he well understood. The Meaning is indeed too clear to need a Gloss; it is undeniable his Soul was after Death to be dispos'd of, where Christ's Soul then was to be, that is, in Paradise, and that Paradise is Heaven, as will appear by and by. This Promise was accomplish'd within two or three Hours after the making of it. At our Lord's dying his Soul ascended up into Paradise, and took

took that of the Thief, according to Promise, with him, as one of the Spoils and Trophies of his late Victory over Hell. The Apostle *Paul* was so equipoiz'd between his Inclination towards Life, that he might serve Christ; and his Inclination towards a Departure, that he might be with him, and enjoy him, that he was at a great loss which to choose, *Phil. 1. from 21 to 24.* Now here are no Words that so much as seem to intimate a Privilege appropriated to the Apostle *Paul*, or any other Apostle. He speaks of the Advantage of Death, as that which every Man, who maketh Christ his Life, might depend upon, as well as they; and of being with Christ after departing hence, as that Reward which every Servant of the Lord *Jesus* hath a Claim to equally with them; and when he saith, *Having a Desire to depart, and to be with Christ*, he insinuates in a very strong, but easy manner, that the latter follows in course upon the former, by virtue of some Sanction or Covenant Promise, that makes it the common Right and Claim of the Saints, as such, and not the peculiar Privilege of this or that Individual among them. And now we may take another View of the Text, and observe the Tenour of the Apostle's Words, both in the *6th* and *8th* Verses. Now if, while we are present with the Body, we are from home as to the Lord; and if, because our Home is with the Lord, therefore we who believe are made willing rather to be absent from the Body, that we may be at home with him; then I think it is plainly no flourishing, but good arguing, to infer, that the Souls of Believers do at their Death immediately go to Christ, to be from that time forward ever with him. But,

2. Give me leave to reason this Case by good Consequences from Scripture. In general, if the Souls of good Men do immediately at Death pass into Heaven, where Christ is; then it is evident they are immediately with Christ. But that the Souls of good Men do immediately pass into Heaven, where Christ is, I prove by several Arguments.

(1.) The Souls of good Men do immediately after Death go into the Bosom of *Abraham*. This is undeniably

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niably intended to be represented to us in the Parable of *Dives* and *Lazarus*, *Luke* 16. In the 22^d Verse you are told, that it came to pass that *Lazarus* died, and was carried by the *Angels* into *Abraham's Bosom*. And in the next Verse you read, that *Dives* lift up his Eyes in *Hell*, and saw, &c.

The Kingdom of Glory is in this Parable metaphorically describ'd to us by a Feast, and according to the high Ideas which the *Jewish* Nation had concerning their Father *Abraham*, he seems to bear the Character of the Master of it, at least of the chief Guest at it, sitting or rather leaning at the highest Seat; and agreeably to the Custom of the Eastern Nations (each one not sitting upon Chairs, but leaning upon Beds about the Table) they lay in one another's Bosoms: And *Lazarus* being here consider'd as next in Honour unto *Abraham*, after Death, in spite of all his Poverty and Sores on Earth, is said to be in his Bosom. Now two things shew, that being in *Abraham's Bosom* intends the heavenly State.

1st, Because this was a Phrase in common use among the *Jews*, where Dr. *Lightfoot* (if I mistake him not) finds it to signify the Heavenly Glory, and from the *Jewish* Dialect of that Day strongly confutes the arbitrary Fancies of a *Limbus Patrum*.

2^{dly}, Because, as *Lazarus* appears to be in the Bosom of *Abraham*, *Dives* is drawn as actually in *Hell*, and in Torments there. If *Dives's* Place was *Hell*, *Lazarus's* Place (here called *Abraham's Bosom*) was in all probability, Heaven. For if Sin reigneth over the separated Souls of bad Men, by hurrying them down to *Hell*, much more will the Grace of God triumph and reign over the separated Souls of good Men, by taking them up to Heaven. And upon the whole, the clearing up this Truth, that when Men die, their Souls do immediately go either to Heaven or *Hell*, seems to be one undeniable Scope of this Parable of our Saviour.

(2.) The Souls of good Men do immediately at Death go into Paradise. *This Day shalt thou be with me in Paradise*. Now we read of a twofold Paradise in Scripture, an Earthly one, and an Heavenly one: The

The Earthly one was that which the first *Adam* was put into, and belonged to our primitive State of Innocency; the Heavenly one is that which the second *Adam* was placed in, and belongs to our State of Restitution; and in that Light you read of it, *Rev.* 2. 7. And Heaven is describ'd by Paradise, as Hell by *Gehenna*, which is an Abbreviation of two *Hebrew* Words, which signify in *English*, the Valley of *Hinnom*? And as the Name of the latter is deriv'd from the most infamous of all Valleys, call'd by that Name, near *Jerusalem*; so the Name of the former is taken from the most glorious of all Gardens, that of *Eden*, called in our Language, *Paradise*. And now it was in *Paradise* the *Jewish* Writings place the great Father and the great Lawgiver of their Nation, *Abraham* and *Moses*. So from the Use of the Word in those Times, the Sense becomes very intelligible in ours. Now then if the Souls of good Men go into *Paradise*, and *Paradise* signifies Heaven; then the Souls of good Men do immediately at Death pass into Heaven, and consequently go to Christ, who is there.

(3.) The Souls of good Men, and particularly the Martyrs, are said to be under the Altar, *Rev.* 6. from 9 to 11. In these Verses we have an account of the opening of the 5th Seal, the Burden of which is the *Dioclesian* Persecution, which was of all the first ten Persecutions the sharpest. So here you have an Idea of the Souls of the Martyrs in a separate State, residing under the Altar, clothed with white Robes; that is (as *Mr. Jos. Mede* observes) taken up into the Rank and Order of Priests. It being a Metaphor borrowed from the Custom of the *Jews*, in trying and admitting of their Priesthood, which was done by arraying them with white Robes, and then receiving them into the Court of the Priests. And you have a noble and copious Idea of these Priests, and of their holy and joyful Ministrations in Heaven, the Antitype of the *Jewish* Temple, *Rev.* 7. from 11 to 17. As for their being under the Altar, that is an Allusion to the Blood of the Sacrifices, that was poured out under the Altar of Burnt-Offering. Now the Altar of Burnt-Offering was consider'd by the *Jews* in their Writings

as the Throne of God's Glory, and so they expressed the Residence of holy Souls in their State of Separation, by being under the Throne of God's Glory, that is, under the Altar. The *Jewish* Schools having all these three Phrases to express that State by; their being in Paradise, their being in *Abraham's Bosom*, and their being under the Throne of Glory.

4. The Souls of good Men are no sooner unclothed of their earthly Tabernacle, but they enter into a House ready made for them, *not with Hands, eternal in the Heavens.* This is the Doctrine of our Saviour in *Luke 16. 9.* *Make to your selves Friends of the unrighteous Mammon;* do all the good you can with your temporal Riches while you live, *that when you fail,* break (that is) and die, *they,* your godly Debtors, all whom you have refreshed, and served with your Substance, who are gone before you into Heaven, or who have gratefully directed their pious and fervent Prayers to Heaven for you, *may receive you,* or be instrumental to your being received into their *everlasting* ethereal *Habitations*, when by Death you are driven out of your temporal and corporeal one. And this is the Substance of all the former Part of the Chapter wherein the Text lies: For the Apostle in that Context doth not mean the State of Resurrection only, but the State of Separation also. That greatly Judicious Man, *CALVIN* (whom above all Men I would chuse for my Guide, so far as we may venture to trust the Judgment of a fallible Man, in matters of Religion) is clearly of this Opinion. He takes the Sense to expatiate and stretch it self to all Eternity, beginning the Account at Death. And thus *the House not made with Hands,* is not (as some think) this Body, made glorious after the Similitude of the second *Adam* at the Day of Judgment; but a celestial Glory put upon our Souls, when separated from these Bodies. And this Sense appears very plain, because all the Branches of the Context, from the 1st to the 8th Verse, seem to coalesce in the same Argument and Design; and consequently the 6th, 7th, and 8th Verses are a Clue to lead us into the Meaning of the whole; and consequently, if those Verses belong to the State

of separate Souls, so do all the rest. There are many other Portions of Scripture, which contribute their Evidence to the Doctrine under Consideration. This is that the Psalmist hath his Eye upon, when he saith, Psal. 73. 24. *Thou shalt guide me by thy Counsel, and afterwards receive me unto Glory.* Afterward! but when? Plainly, when the Divine Guidance in all the critical Paths of a Wilderness World ceases, then that Glory commences, as *Israel* passed out of the Desert into *Canaan*. This State of separate Souls is that which the Prophet *Isaiah* speaks of, *Isa.* 57. 2. This is that which the Apostle means, when he saith, *Rom.* 13. 11. *Now is our Salvation nearer than when we first believed;* and it is that which the Apostle *Peter's* abundant *Entrance* refers to, *2 Pet.* 1. 12. *For so an Entrance shall be ministered to you abundantly, &c.* And the last Prayer of the Protomartyr can no otherwise be accounted for, but upon the foot of this Doctrine, when he said, *Lord Jesus, receive my Spirit,* *Acts* 7. 59. And thus have I, as fully as my Time would allow me, demonstrated the Remove of holy Souls from the Body unto Christ; from tabernacling on Earth to dwelling in Heaven; from being at home as to this Body, unto a Being (in a far more proper and excellent Sense) at home as to the Lord. And so much may suffice for the first Thing in the Text, the State of holy Souls, when they depart this Life. I now proceed to shew,

Secondly, The Temper of Mind, which we ought to be in with respect to that State. And this is express'd by two Words, the one of which signifies we are bold and fearless, not pusillanimous, and cast down under our Afflictions, because we know, that no sooner hath Death prevailed over this mortal Life, and turn'd us out of House and Home into an unknown World, but we shall take immediate Possession of our everlasting Habitation, where the blessed *Jesus* is, and so be for ever with him, which is our most proper, and to be sure our best Home. The other signifies, we are by the View of the blessed Consequences of dying brought to that Temper of Mind, that how close soever the Love of Life and of the Body cleaves to us, yet the

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Desire of leaving it, for the sake of being present with the Lord, which is a greater Good than any that can be had in it, is more strong and governing in us. So that those two Words are expressive of two holy Dispositions, which were eminently seen in the Primitive Confessors of our Lord *Jesus*, and which ought to be in us also.

1. The Inclination of the new Nature to be present with the Lord, and in order to that end, to be absent from the Body. *And willing rather to be absent from the Body, &c.* Which Words again present us with a twofold Bias in every holy Soul; the one belonging to Nature, willing rather to be present with the Body; the other belonging to Grace, willing rather to be present with the Lord, and to be absent from the Body. There is in Nature a strong Affection to the present Life, and consequently a strong Aversion to Death. There is in Grace a strong Affection towards the heavenly Life, which can no otherwise be obtained but by Death. Between these two Principles there is a mighty Struggle, and the Success is various and alternate; but usually Faith and Grace are victorious, so far as to reconcile us to the Bitterness of Death, under the Views and Hopes of the beatifical and celestial Life that springeth out of it. But the Victory of Grace over Nature in this regard, as it is often subordinately owing to the Influence of our bodily Afflictions, so it always is the Effect of the mighty Power of God, as the principal Cause; and this the Apostle suggests, Ver. 5. where, after speaking of the strange Tendency of a Believer's Heart towards Heaven, he adds, *Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same thing, is God.* The truth is, without introducing the Power of God, as a Piece of Machinery into a Scene, this vanquishing of the natural Abhorrence of Death by a strong Appetite towards a future and invisible State, is a præternatural *Phænomenon* altogether unaccountable.

2. The other Disposition which we should aim at, is Magnanimity, and Confidence, in all the Distresses and Grievs of Life, whether of a more publick or of a more private Nature, springing out of a joyful Expectation

of separate Souls, so do all the rest. There are many other Portions of Scripture, which contribute their Evidence to the Doctrine under Consideration. This is that the Psalmist hath his Eye upon, when he saith, Psal. 73. 24. *Thou shalt guide me by thy Counsel, and afterwards receive me unto Glory.* Afterward! but when? Plainly, when the Divine Guidance in all the critical Paths of a Wilderness World ceases, then that Glory commences, as *Israel* passed out of the Desert into *Canaan*. This State of separate Souls is that which the Prophet *Isaiah* speaks of, *Isa.* 57. 2. This is that which the Apostle means, when he saith, *Rom.* 13. 11. *Now is our Salvation nearer than when we first believed;* and it is that which the Apostle *Peter's* abundant *Entrance* refers to, *2 Pet.* 1. 12. *For so an Entrance shall be ministered to you abundantly, &c.* And the last Prayer of the Protomartyr can no otherwise be accounted for, but upon the foot of this Doctrine, when he said, *Lord Jesus, receive my Spirit,* *Acts* 7. 59. And thus have I, as fully as my Time would allow me, demonstrated the Remove of holy Souls from the Body unto Christ; from tabernacling on Earth to dwelling in Heaven; from being at home as to this Body, unto a Being (in a far more proper and excellent Sense) at home as to the Lord. And so much may suffice for the first Thing in the Text, the State of holy Souls, when they depart this Life. I now proceed to shew,

Secondly, The Temper of Mind, which we ought to be in with respect to that State. And this is express'd by two Words, the one of which signifies we are bold and fearless, not pusillanimous, and cast down under our Afflictions, because we know, that no sooner hath Death prevailed over this mortal Life, and turn'd us out of House and Home into an unknown World, but we shall take immediate Possession of our everlasting Habitation, where the blessed *Jesus* is, and so be for ever with him, which is our most proper, and to be sure our best Home. The other signifies, we are by the View of the blessed Consequences of dying brought to that Temper of Mind, that how close soever the Love of Life and of the Body cleaves to us, yet the

Desire

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pectation of being with our Lord Jesus after Death. And this may be consider'd absolutely in it self, or in relation to the Fears of Death, and the Multiplicity of Sorrows we are incident to in Life. Consider it absolutely in it self, and so whether our Condition in this World be prosperous, or adverse, chearful or melancholy, yet the Hope of Glory ought to be a perpetual Spring of Confidence and Joy. For one of the great Precepts of the New Covenant is, *Rejoyce in the Lord alway*, &c. And as this Joy is a Degree above Serenity and Peace, so there are a great many Degrees belonging to Joy it self, and we should labour after the highest of them, not only now and then, but all our Days, *Rejoycing with Joy unspeakable, and full of Glory*. But if you consider this Disposition relatively, with respect to the Fears of Death, and all its frightful Harbingers, and to the Multiplicity of Sorrows we are incident to in this Life, so we ought to apply the Hope of Glory, and of being ever with the Lord at Death, to the checking of our Grievs, and bounding of our Sorrows, and maintaining of an equilibrious and even Frame of Soul in every Trial. For it is to be remembered, that the greatest Favourites of Heaven have no Pretence to Freedom from those Afflictions which all Men are born unto; but a gracious Father hath provided the strongest Consolations to support their Spirits under them. The Hope of being one Day at home, is extremely quieting under all the Inconveniencies we are liable unto while abroad. You have a Model of Rejoycing in those Hopes and Views, and of triumphing over all our spiritual Enemies, and over Death among the rest, in *Rom. 8.* from 31 to the End. And now it would be no hard Task to make out, why we, whom God hath wrought for this self same thing, by the renewing of the Holy Ghost, and have thro' Grace a lively Hope of Glory, should be willing rather to be absent from the Body, and to be present with the Lord, and joyful under an Expectation that it will be so. In general, to depart and to be with Christ, is far better than to stay here, and continue at a Distance from him. The Apostle is express in this, *Phil. 1. 23.* yea, and in the Original there is (says Mr. *Horne*)

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(How) an Emphasis, which is but faintly express'd in our Translation; for the Apostle useth a double Comparison, πολλὰ γὰρ μᾶλλον κρεῖσσον, *it is by much more better.* The *Rationale* of this will appear,

1. By balancing the Inconveniencies of our embody'd Estate, and the Advantages of our separate one.

2. By opposing the Advantages of the separate State unto all the ~~desirable~~ Appearances, and Pretences, of *fallacious* the embody'd one.

1. By balancing the Inconveniencies of our embody'd State, and the Advantages of our separate one. Adversities and Afflictions are the usual and ordinary Appurtenances of our present State of Mortality; *Heb. 13. 2. Remember them that suffer Adversity, &c.* Our principal Adversary the Devil goes about like a roaring Lion, seeking whom he may devour. So we cannot in reason but be always looking for Annoyance and Temptation from that side, while we are out of Heaven. And since we have a Body of Sin in us, as well as of Flesh about us, we must expect to be soyl'd and overcome in many a particular Encounter, and be made Prisoners to the Law of Death, which is in our Members, *Rom. 7. 23.* and to be a thousand times before we die render'd very miserable, through the captivating Power of indwelling Sin. God being a God that hideth his Face from the House of Jacob, the being now and then left to walk in Darkness, and to see no Light, ought not to be accounted a strange thing, while we continue absent from the Lord. How safe soever electing, redeeming, and renewing Grace, the Council of Peace between the Father and the Son, and all the Promises of everlasting Life to Believers, make us, with respect to this future State, yet we have no absolute Security, against over-whelming Fears of the Wrath of God, and of a quite contrary State. But let the Condition of our Souls, with respect to the Fears of the Event, be what it will, it is certain that Death is an Enemy, as dreadful as he is unavoidable; he will find us out, he will force us to an Engagement, and he will be too hard for us; there is no Discharge or conquering in that War, otherwise than by dying. And he is a very terrible Adversary, he is call'd the

King

King of Terrors, and this dreadful Battle is before us. Blessed are they who have already fought it, and obtain'd the bloody Victory. But these and all the other Considerations make the present State of Frailty and Mortality very undesirable and burdensome; they make us groan exceedingly in our Tabernacle, and render the Thoughts of our Home very pleasing and delightful; this is the dark Side of the Cloud. Now let us behold its bright Side; when once we have dropt the Body, we shall in that Moment be disincumber'd of all the miserable Appendages of it, all its Diseases, and Pains, and the far heavier Burden of our detestable Corruptions will be laid down too. For when the Spirits of just Men shall be separated, in that Instant they will be perfected. Satan is a dreaded Enemy now, but God will bruise Satan under our Feet shortly. When our Souls have departed out of our Bodies, they will be plac'd above the Reach of Evil and Temptation. It will be entirely out of the Power of the second Death to hurt them. An everlasting Period will then be put to the War that is now between us, and all our dreadful Adversaries. *God*, a Troop, may overcome him in a single Battle, thro' the Power of Sin, but he will overcome at least in the Conclusion of the War, thro' the far greater Power of Grace. That which is now before us, will then be behind us, and we shall look back upon the dark Valley of the Shadow of Death, with the more serene and joyful Resentments of our past Dangers, and of the seasonable Interpositions of the Grace, Power, and Spirit of God, and of our Lord Jesus Christ, at that nice and dangerous Juncture for us. But the Advantages of the future State are not only negative, in Opposition to the Disadvantages of the present, but positive, and great, and many. *Things that Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, &c.* If we therefore thus in our Minds compare the Inconveniencies of our embody'd State, with the Advantages of our separate one, and Faith maintains a just Superiority over our Unbelief, in this Debate, we must needs feel a strange and strong Desire and Heat towards that separate State, and as great a Coldness towards the present. Especially if,

2. You compare the Advantages of the embody'd State, with the Advantages of the separate State together ; for so it will appear, that those of the former are of no Account at all, upon a Balance with the latter ; if it were only for this, *that the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.* And therefore while we look not at things present, because they are temporal, but at things future, because they are eternal ; our Inclination towards the latter must needs be the ruling Principle of our Souls. For while we confine our Thoughts to Things of Sense, a Moment of Time is long ; but when we disengage our Minds from Earth, and fix our Thoughts intent upon Eternity, then a thousand Years of time begin to be but as a Moment. For what Proportion is there between the longest time, and an everlasting Duration ? But more particularly,

(1.) The Body is concreated with us, and so natural to us ; therefore it must needs be hard parting with it. In it we always lived, ever since we began to live ; we therefore practically take it for our Home, and know not how to leave it ; like a Child, who having been always kept abroad, takes his Nurse's House for his Home, and is not willing to return to his Father's. But (my Beloved) one Moment in the State of Separation spent with the blessed Jesus in the heavenly Places, will give us juster Sentiments of these things, and will strike our Souls with the last Assurance, that the Body is not our Home. And then will our *House that is eternal in the Heavens*, be unspeakably more familiar and natural to us, than ever the Tabernacle of the Body was.

(2.) Earthly Pleasures, whether of Body or Mind, springing out of our Inclinations (whether natural or adventitious) and out of the Enjoyment of their proper Objects, extremely endear the embody'd State to us. But alas ! what is this World with its most exalted Fruitions ? It is a World of Shadows and Appearances. It is the other World only, that is a World of Substances and Realities. The Whole of Life is but a Dream, at best, a pleasant Dream, out
of

of which we awake, when the Sun of Righteousness arises upon our separate Souls, in the Morning of Eternity. What then are all the Pleasures of Life unto those Pleasures which are at God's right Hand for ever more? And to those which will eternally and without Intermission flow from the dear Smiles of a Redeemer's Face? And from the ravishing Converse of the purify'd Spirits of just Men, who have run their Race, and of the shining Seraphims? The most powerful dead Weight after all upon this Willingness to be gone, and upon this Rejoycing in the Hope of being with the Lord, is the Invisibleness of the future State. In that respect the present may seem to have the Advantage of it; the one is visible, the other not. But I answer to this: Doth not the Apostle say, *We see Jesus crown'd with Glory and Honour, &c.* We entirely believe a future Glory, and in that Sense see it. For there is a Sight which belongs to Faith. We believe a future Life and Immortality upon the Authority of the Lord Jesus in his Word, who hath brought both to Light there. By Faith we believe the Scriptures to be the Word of God, and from them we know in general, that if God hath wrought us for this self-same thing, we shall then be present with the Lord, when we are absent from our Bodies. We have also a further Satisfaction concerning this future Glory, from our spiritual Sense of an inward and transforming Work of the holy Spirit, upon our Hearts, by which we are wrought for this self-same thing. We may easily infer that there is another World, prepar'd for our everlasting Abode, which is more connatural to the new Nature in us, than this World is. This World is indeed adapted unto our animal Life, and in some measure to the rational; but what Congruity hath it to the divine one? The State of heavenly Glory therefore is exceeding plain from the State of Grace. Some of us likewise have still higher Assurances of the Blessedness of this State of Separation from the Body, by some transient Glimpses of it, which the blessed Spirit hath been pleas'd to indulge us with. And we have the extraordinary Experiences of others, to add unto, and supply the Defects of our

our own. So little Reason then have we upon the whole to be ty'd down by Nature, and by Fetters of Sense, unto Earth; and so much Reason to stretch our Views and Hopes into Eternity, and to derive the greatest of our Satisfaction from within the Vail, and to feel the strongest Inclinations to a World on the other side of Death, and above the State.

So much may suffice for the doctrinal Part. Let us now proceed to make some Improvement of the whole. And,

1. By way of Exhortation.
2. By way of Comfort.

1. By way of Exhortation, and that in three Particulars.

1. Let us hold fast the main Truth which the Text sets before us, that holy Souls become very happy in the Presence and Enjoyment of the Lord Jesus, as soon as they are separated from their Bodies; for, *Blessed are the Dead that die in the Lord*. It is not only true that they *shall be* blessed hereafter at the Resurrection, but *they are* in a blessed State, even now. There are some who profess to believe that the Spirits of just Men fall asleep at Death, and so continue till they awake at the Resurrection. There are others, whose Principles send the far greater part of Souls, that go out of the World, into a State they call *Purgatory*, as being too good for Hell, and too bad for Heaven. And a third sort not contented with making the State of the Resurrection to be different only in Degrees of Blessedness, from that of the Separation, assert a Preheminence in the very Nature of it, and will not allow the separate Souls of good Men to be in Heaven, and to be with Christ there; but all these Doctrines are contrary to the Word of God, as appears by what you have heard this Day. And to that Word, as in all Points, so in this, you will do well, with that unlimited Subjection, which Man's Intellect owes unto God, to give heed.

E.

2. Let

2. Let us altogether ascribe it to Grace, that ever such Provision should be made for the Safety and Felicity of us lost Sinners, in a future State. That even the Execution of the Curse of the Law against us in Death, should be the very Means of advancing us, to so consummate an Happiness and Life in Heaven, and to the everlasting Enjoyment of the blessed Jesus there, we can never advance the Honours of this Grace high enough.

3)^{ly} Let us lay out our most active Endeavours to obtain the Frame mention'd in the Text, the being *confident and willing to be absent from the Body, and to be present with the Lord.* Death is an Adversary so formidable, and a dislodging from the Body into a World we never saw, so unnatural, that we cannot choose but shudder at it, (and yet as terrible as dying is, it is infinitely better dying to be with Christ, than living here on Earth without him) but since this awful Dissolution of the Frame of Nature is inevitable, we had need look out to secure such a State of Happiness after Death, as may place us above the present Fears of it, and any Possibility of Injury from it afterwards. And since we are obnoxious to so many Adversities in this World, and there are no Consolations to qualify them, but what are taken from the other, therefore the gaining of an Interest in the Happiness of that other World, is worthy of our greatest Pains in this. Here then let us use our most vigorous Endeavours, that at last we may be able to say, as the Apostle in my Text, *We are confident and willing rather to be absent from the Body, and to be present with the Lord.* Oh happy, happy they, who can say they are so! Now then,

1. Let it be all our Business to attain this best of Knowledge; it is impossible for us to be willing to die without it. We must lay our Foundation plainly here. All other Extenuations of the Horror of dying,
how

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how philosophical and ingenious soever, are only Sports of Wit and Amusements to the Fancy, without the Knowledge of our being present with the Lord Jesus. *after death* But how may this Knowledge be attain'd? I answer, If God hath wrought and prepar'd you for this State, he will certainly bring you to it. Hath he then ~~after your Separation from your Bodies,~~ made you meet for Heaven? You will never fall short of it. Can you perceive in your selves the Characters of a new Creature; he hath prepar'd new Heavens and a new Earth for new Creatures to dwell in. Hath he wrought in you strong Desires after Heaven, and after the Enjoyment of the blessed Jesus who is in it? 'Tis a Demonstration that he intends you shall be for ever with him there. You must therefore do your best to engage the sanctifying Operations of the Spirit upon your Souls; and then from an introspective View of them, may you conclude the Happiness of your future State, and infer that you shall be present with the Lord when absent from the Body; and probably you will attain these Operations, if you do your utmost in order to it. I would advise you to ponder at your Leisure, the Nine first Verses of *Prov.* 2, &c. When you have got this blessed Knowledge, that as soon as you are absent from the Body, you shall be present with the Lord, Affections and Desires towards that blessed State will spring up in course. But then,

2. Have a care of quenching them. Now there are two ways of cooling these Desires to live in Heaven with Christ; the one is by prostituting your Souls unto the Pleasure of any Lust; and the other is, when you are off of your Guard, in respect of the lawful Enjoyments of this World, and so fall under the Power of them; either of these irregular Kinds of Passions, will interfere with Flames of a Celestial Nature.

3. Do all you can to blow up the Fire of Love, and of spiritual Desires after this future Presence of the Lord Jesus in Heaven.

In order to which end ;

1. Enjoin it upon your selves as a daily Task, to have close Meditations upon the Glory of this future State.

2. Conscientiously maintain a most inward and vital Communion with the Lord Jesus, by Acts of Faith every Day. For this is the way to have at times such Specimens and Manifestations of his attractive Excellencies, as will set your whole Souls on Fire, until you have a full Possession of him.

3. Labour to live in an Evangelical Obedience to all his Commands. Obedience will make us still fitter for Heaven, and will keep your Evidences for it bright and legible. But after all, the Proportions of Unbelief and Carnality in us, are so much above those of Faith, and of the divine Love, that our Celestial Father, in the consummate Greatness of his Wisdom, sees Afflictions absolutely needful for us, to accomplish that Relaxation from this World, and those Propensions to the other, which by pure Faith and Love we seldom arrive at.

(2.) A Word by way of Comfort. How full of Consolation are the Breasts of this Evangelical Doctrine ! How full of Consolation with respect to our selves ! The Time draws on that we must die. How infinitely supporting is it, that so doth the Time of our Salvation too ! That the first and second Death are so happily disjoin'd ! That the Consequences of Death are so inviting, how shocking soever Death it self is ! And the thing which we most dread will bring us to the Fruition of that which we most love, the blessed Jesus ! Oh what Matter of Joy is here ! For we shall find infinitely more in order to our Satisfaction and Happiness in Heaven from one Christ, than from all the Varieties which the Earth affords us. Again, how full

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full of Consolation are these Springs, with respect to our dear Friends or nearest Relations, to whom to live was Christ, and so to die hath been gain! We mourn for them, and it is a Debt to Nature so to do, but we must not mourn as those that have no Hope concerning them, for that would be injurious unto Grace. We are Losers indeed by their dying, but they are Gainers. They are absent from us, and we are troubled; but they are present with the Lord, and they rejoyce. They are gone from us, but they are gone to Christ, and added to the Spirits of just Men made perfect, among whom they live and reign with him. How comfortable are such Reflections with respect to pious Friends departed! Blessed be God, the Relations of the Deceas'd (whom we lament this Day) have a full Flow of this Consolation, without the least Reserve of Jealousie, with respect unto her. This will soon appear to all, from her Character, which was transmitted to me from a Hand very fit to prepare it, with which I shall now present you; and it is as followeth:

It may be expected that some Account should be given of the Deceas'd; and it would be inexcusable to bury her in Oblivion with Men, who (as we have Reason to believe) is had in everlasting Remembrance with God. It might be also very injurious to withhold a Character, which yields so much Instruction, not to say Reproof unto the Living, at the same time that it honours the precious Memory of such a Mother in *Israel*; an Honour not the less her due, because she never desir'd it, or thought her self worthy of it. She had the Advantage of a good Descent, and pious Education: Her Father was of an antient Family in *Hertfordshire*, a Gentleman of an Estate, eminent Parts and Learning, and one who bravely espous'd the Interests of Religion. Her Mother was a Gentlewoman of very good Extraction; and yet more distinguish'd by an accomplish'd, ingenuous, and gracious Soul, than by her Alliance or high Birth. This her

her Daughter was a bright Image of so excellent a Mother. God who design'd her to no obscure Station or Circumstances in the World, gave her a Body and a Mind worthy of that Respect, which she was to receive in the several Stages of her Life. She was in her younger Years blest'd with a strong and healthy Constitution. Her Aspect was very comely and graceful. In her Deportment there was Gravity without Moroseness, Cheerfulness without Levity, and a most obliging Civility, the Result not of Art and Constraint, but of a generous Mind, which inform'd and govern'd her whole Behaviour. Her Apprehension was quick and lively; her Understanding clear, and comprehensive; her Judgment solid and distinguishing; her Fancy refin'd and vigorous; her Invention happy and fertile; her Affections strong, well directed, and constant; and the whole Frame of her Soul suited to those great and useful Undertakings, in which the greater part of her Life was employ'd.

In her tender Years she felt divine Impressions upon her Soul, which paved the way to an early Conversion; a Conversion indeed attended with very great inward Troubles, but productive of a most eminent Holiness, and a rich Understanding and Experience of the Grace of the Gospel, with a warm Inclination (above most, both by writing and discoursing) to be useful to others. Her Insight into this Grace, the deep Impression it made upon her Soul, caus'd her ever after to value most (tho' she lov'd all good Men) those Ministers of Christ, who with a suitable Conversation entertain'd the most savory Sentiments of it, and who more strictly conform'd their Faith and Worship unto the Word of God as their only Rule, and pursued his Glory as their highest End.

When she was young she was a singular Pattern of Piety towards God, Duty to her Parents, Mortification to the Vanities of the World, and Commiseration to the Afflicted, in particular to the Faithful under Persecutions, whom she visited even in Prison,

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son, and reliev'd with her Generosity and Beneficence.

When Providence called her into the Conjugal Relation, it did associate her with one that was an eminent Pattern of Religion, and Patron of its Followers, in Mercy to them both, and to many others. This happy Pair for 36 Years walked together as Heirs of the Grace of Life, in the sweetest and most amiable Affection, most happily agreeing in Judgment and Practice, in Wisdom and Zeal, and in Endeavours to be and do good, walking as *Zacharias and Elizabeth*, in all the Ordinances and Commandments of the Lord blameless.

Her dear Consort having the Tryal (for more than 30 Years) of a very weakly and infirm Constitution, supported (under Providence) chiefly by Art, and rendred thereby incapable of attending domestick Affairs, the Care of a very large Family was devolved upon her, which she manag'd with the exactest Oeconomy, and the most easy Dispatch, together with a singular and indefatigable Care of her nearest Relative, under his often Infirmities, and yet found Time for a constant Family Worship, and for all the Duties of Retirement, and for many extraordinary Days both of Fasting and Thanksgiving, which were carried on both by Ministers and others in her House, on especial Occasions; all which made her Family a *Bethel*, a Nursery of Religion, in which Grace took rooting (under her particular Care) in the Hearts of many Servants and others, who prov'd useful Christians in their Generation.

God was pleas'd to bless her with a numerous Offspring, Thirteen in Number, of which Two died before they had attained the Use of their Reason; and she had the Comfort to see, in all the rest of the Branches, the Divine Life, and the Fruits of Righteousness, as a signal Answer of her many Prayers, and a remarkable Blessing upon her excellent Instructions, and extraordinary Care in their Education. She travel'd again in Birth, till Christ was
formed

formed in them, and had *no greater Joy than to see her Children walking in the Truth.* But as God gave her great Grace and Comfort, so he visited her with many and very great Afflictions: The Loss of two Mothers (her Yokefellow's and her own) and both eminently good, and of so tender and gracious a Husband, were no small Trials, and it must be allow'd to have been a singular Exercise to see Eight of Ten Children, who were grown up, go off the Stage before her; and among these, two Sons in their blooming Age, of such rare Accomplishments, both as Gentlemen and Christians, as highly endear'd them, as well to others as to an affectionate Parent, and render'd them capable of being useful to an high degree in both Church and State. But these and many other Strokes God enabled her to bear with a most exemplary Submission and Resignation, saying on such Occasions, "I thank God, who hath brought me to his foot; I would be so, I am so, and am fully satisfied to be what he would have me be, and I give him Reverence."

Her Bounty and Liberality to the Indigent was very great, and yet manag'd with such a prudent Distribution, and attended with such an extraordinary Blessing from Heaven, as that there was notwithstanding a plentiful Provision for a large Family, and many incidental Occasions.

It ought not to be forgotten how constant and universal a Reception and Refuge in the worst of Times, all Christ's Ministers, who suffered for pure and undefiled Religion, found in her House, and what Kindness and Opportunities of Service they met with there.

In the latter Part of her Time the Toils and Sorrows of Life broke in upon her Constitution, impair'd her Strength, and inclin'd her to retire the last Seven Years from Business, and these she employ'd in a yet closer Preparation for her great Change, in the Use of the publick Ordinances, and in the private Duties of Religion, in which she often met with much

of God ; her Faith being strong, and her Love more and more transfer'd from Earth to Heaven. And it was no wonder to find Fruit thus ripened bending to the Gatherer, and to see a Soul exercised in realizing Views, and sweet Foretastes of Heaven, longing very much to be there, which she did not barely as a Discharge from Sorrow, but chiefly as an Exemption from Sin, and as a Place where God and the Blessed *Jesus* are fully and eternally enjoyed. In this Sense, and with these Views, for some Years before her Death, she could speak the Apostle's Language, *Being confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the Body, and to be present with the Lord.* This made her welcome every Affliction that seem'd likely to hasten her Dissolution, tho' she could quietly submit, when she found her self disappointed, and her Days prolonged.

In the beginning of her last Sickness, her Spirit was sedate and calm, firmly trusting in that Redeemer, in whom she had believed ; but as the Agonies of Nature grew greater towards the Conclusion, so her Faith and Joy proportionably advanced, and her Patience had an eminent Trial, and its perfect Work. Seldom are there known such exquisite Pains in the Body, and Joy in the Soul, as met in her. And as God continued to her the Use of her Speech and Reason to the last ; so did she imploy them in most wise and pertinent, and gracious Exhortations, solemnly given to her Children, and in the most ardent Breathings to be with Christ, and see his eternal Glory, (as she express'd it) without a Glass between.

She discovered a very great Desire of, and Delight in Prayer, which was made with and for her, almost without ceasing. She often requested him who officiated, to commit her Soul into the Arms of Christ. She declared her Joy in the Hope of Glory, calling frequently upon the Lord *Jesus* to come quickly, desiring that the holy Angels might do their Office : And manifested an uncommon Pleasure, when Death

made its near and visible Approaches: And thus she finish'd her Course.

And now, my Beloved, every one must allow that the Militant Church hath suffer'd a great Loss in the Death of so eminent a Member of it. Christians of so complete a Character are very rare in our Days, which makes the present Affliction the harder to bear. But then we ought to have a most grateful Resentment of that holy Care, which she (with her pious Consort) took in the Education of her Posterity, the happy Fruits of which I may be permitted (I hope without Flattery) to say the Church of God hath enjoy'd, in those of them who are dead, and doth still enjoy, in those of them who are yet alive, who are, and I trust will be, a Seed to serve the Lord Jesus, now their Parent's Venerable Heads are laid in their Graves.

To you, my dear Friends, and reverend Brethren, who are most sensibly touch'd by this be-reaving Providence, I would willingly have address'd my self in a distinct Word of Exhortation, had I thought it needful. But you your selves are taught of God to make a wise and spiritual Improvement of this Stroke. To call upon you to rejoice in the much more than necessary Evidences which you have of the present happy State of your Relations, and to a-waken your *Selves* to a very vigilant Preparation for a dying Hour, by this Example of Mortality, would be superfluous, since you not only know these things, but are so happy as to do them. But O, my Brethren, and Friends, let us endeavour, in the Grace of Christ, to hold on as we have begun, and persevere unto the End, and to be Followers of them, who through Faith and Patience are now inheriting the Promises. And could we all be so wise, as to improve the frequent Instances of the Power of Death, that present themselves before us, by regulating our Lives according to the transcendently excellent Laws of

the Death of Mrs. ANNA BAKER. 35

of our Redeemer, and such beautiful Patterns, as this, which hath now been held forth to us; we should soon so far moderate our Love of the Animal Life, and so inflame our Affections towards the celestial State, as to be able to say with the Apostle, *We are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the Body, and to be present with the Lord.*

F I N I S.

ERRATA.

PAG. 5. l. 1. leave out *even*. pag. 6. l. 11. *Circumstance*. pag. 21. l. 8. r. *fallacious* for *desirable*. l. 26. for *cho* r. *the*. pag. 23. l. 7. r. *the* *Starrs*, for *this State*. Pag 26. l. 10. r. *3dly*. pag. 26. l. 35. after *Knowledge*. r. *that when we are absent from the Body, we shall be present with the Lord*. pag. 27. l. 3. r. *with the Lord Jesus* after *Death*. l. 7. leave out, "after your Separation from your Bodies. pag. 34. l. 27. r. *your selves*."

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